
Evaluation: Communicating Effectively with Older Drivers Project

Final report

February 2020

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This short report provides an evaluation of the Communicating Effectively with Older Drivers project from March 2019 to February 2020. The focus of the work during the delivery period has been to develop a suitable marketing campaign, through which the core outcomes can be achieved.
- 1.2 The overarching aim of the project is to help shape the development of communication, campaigns and interventions targeted at older drivers.
- 1.3 The report provides a summary of the research and communication activity undertaken by a research organisation and a specialist communications agency during the delivery period. It is based on information provided in quarterly reports (up to December 2019), background information provided by RoSPA and the research findings report provided by Progressive Partnerships.
- 1.4 The programme of activity from March 2019 to February 2020 aimed to achieve the following objectives and outcomes:
 - Establish effective and innovative means by which key messages can be delivered to older drivers and their families.
 - Establish the most effective formats into which key road safety and relevant health-related messages can be incorporated to maximise impact and engage with older drivers.
- 1.5 At the time of this evaluation (January - February 2020) the set-up phase of the project was complete and the campaign had launched and a series of events were planned. This brief evaluation therefore focuses on the set-up phase. It does not assess progress towards the outcomes around raising awareness and increasing uptake of driver training. Those outcomes (listed below) cannot be evaluated until the campaign and interventions have been delivered.
 - Raise awareness of and change attitudes towards risks associated with the ageing process and their effect on driving ability.
 - Raise awareness of pathways to further driver training and assessment tools to help maintain independence.
 - Encourage concerned families to have conversations with older relatives about their ability on the road.
 - Help people drive for as long as possible without endangering themselves and others.
 - Evaluate through a pilot delivery programme the impact of and receptiveness to the chosen messages among older drivers and their families.
 - Increase the numbers of older drivers taking further driver training and increase levels of awareness and attitudes towards such schemes.

2. Project activity and research findings

- 2.1 The chapter outlines the activity undertaken from March 2019 to February 2020, relating to the Communicating Effectively with Older Drivers project. The overall aim of the activity was to conduct research with older people and relevant stakeholders in order to develop an effective road safety campaign.
- 2.2 RoSPA commissioned a research organisation (Progressive Partnership) and a specialist communications agency (Smarts Communicate) to conduct elements of the project.

Primary research

Focus groups

- 2.3 The aim of the focus groups was to explore and understand people's knowledge and attitudes towards driving. The focus groups also tested key messages with older drivers and their families.
- 2.4 The research was conducted by Progressive Partnership. The fieldwork involved:
- two 90-minute focus groups with older drivers; and
 - two 90-minute focus groups with family members.
- 2.5 The focus groups took place in June 2019 across Glasgow and Aberdeen. Each group involved five or six participants from a mix of genders and socioeconomic backgrounds. In total the research involved 12 older drivers and 11 family members. Progressive Partnership analysed the feedback from research participants and provided recommendations on how these might be included in the campaign.
- 2.6 In addition to the focus groups Smarts Communicate conducted an omnibus survey with older drivers and their families. The survey explored older drivers' views on the conditions which affect driving. One thousand and two people responded to the survey and 25% of those responding were over 65.
- 2.7 RoSPA also consulted with a range of stakeholders to discuss methods for effectively targeting and reaching older people.

Focus group findings and recommendations

- 2.8 The research had five key focus areas. Below we summarise the research findings and report the recommendations in relation to these key areas. More detailed information on the method and findings are available in the research report produced by Progressive Partnership.

Risks associated with the ageing process/age-related factors that can affect driving ability.

- 2.9 The research found that older people and families had a good level of awareness of the driving risks associated with increasing age. They were particularly aware of cognitive changes and changes in vision.
- 2.10 Recommendation from Progressive Partnership: [Communications could highlight the signs to look for and when these changes become a problem for driving.](#)

Awareness of legal requirements (renewing licence at 70).

- 2.11 Research participants did not have a high level of awareness of the legal requirements relating to driving, including the requirement to renew your license once you reach 70. Although they were not aware of the existing legal requirements or procedures, many thought that some form of medical check was necessary.
- 2.12 Recommendation from Progressive Partnership: [The campaign could usefully raise awareness of the legal requirements and the fact it is a self-certification process – and any action to take when prompted by the renewal letter.](#)

Driver training/assessment tools available to older drivers to help them maintain their independence.

- 2.13 Research participants were not aware of driving assessments or courses for older drivers. Some were receptive to the idea, and some queried what the course would involve, and importantly, if attending an assessment might result in loss of license. Family members were more receptive to the idea. However, they noted that they wanted their older family member to take the initiative, rather than feeling criticised for their driving ability.
- 2.14 Recommendation from Progressive Partnership: [There is a clear need to advertise these courses. It should include clear communication of the benefits of taking part, with clear messages to reassure participants that the events will not result in their licence being taken away from them.](#)

Options for self-regulation/modifying behaviour to continue driving safely.

- 2.15 The research found that older drivers were already self-regulating their driving behaviour and making practical changes.
- 2.16 Recommendation from Progressive Partnership: [Providing information about options for self-regulation could help reassure older drivers that the campaign isn't trying to persuade them to give up driving completely. However, there is less of a](#)

requirement for detailed information about this topic, as people are generally taking these actions already.

Receptiveness to potential messages about road safety/driving ability

- 2.17 Progressive partnership tested eleven key messages with older drivers, and three key messages with family members. Research participants had mixed responses to the key messages.
- 2.18 Older drivers responded positively when messages were direct, providing new information or facts/advice. They also appreciated when messages reflected their personal responsibility and demonstrated the tangible outcomes of unsafe driving.
- 2.19 Family members responded positively when messages acknowledged the challenge of discussing driving and safety with their older family members. They did not respond positively when they felt that messages placed a burden of responsibility on them to have this discussion.
- 2.20 Two terms were not well received: 'cognitive changes' and 'older drivers', and specifically, the website URL 'olderdrivers.org.uk' was not favoured.
- 2.21 Detail on the wording of the key messages and responses to each message is available in the research report produced by Progressive Partnership.

Secondary research

- 2.22 RoSPA conducted a literature review to explore the best methods of targeting and reaching older people. This research was conducted to ensure that the campaign messages and method of dissemination facilitate good outcomes across the target group.
- 2.23 The literature review found that, in order the effect changes in behaviour, it may be beneficial to offer further educational opportunities alongside the campaign.

Campaign

- 2.24 Following the focus groups, omnibus survey and literature review, Smarts Communicate provided recommendations for key messages in the campaign. RoSPA then developed a strategic communications campaign plan based on the research findings and recommendations.
- 2.25 The campaign aims to:
- encourage older drivers to review their current ability and relevant cognitive skills;
 - help older drivers understand their legal and moral responsibilities;
 - provide advice/guidance on older drivers training;

- highlight the implications associated with restrictive medical conditions;
- help families concerned about older relatives to know what to do and how to instigate a conversation about driving; and
- overall, reduce the number of injuries on Scotland's roads associated with older drivers.

2.26 The focus of the campaign directed at older people will be to:

- Get them to think more about their ability on the road and the factors that might affect their safety.
- Encourage them to feel that they should take action to update their skills and ensure they are safe.
- Increase the number of people within the target audience seeking out information and training, and taking up an experienced driver assessment.

2.27 RoSPA launched the campaign in February 2020. This time was deliberately selected to avoid overlap with other road safety campaigns. The campaign is targeted at people over 65 in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen – mirroring the areas in which the primary research took place. RoSPA will also be able to offer interventions in these areas, to enhance the impact of the campaign messages.

2.28 To date (February 2020) campaign involved:

- A press release
- Three video case studies
- Social media posts
- Posters and leaflets
- Media coverage in print media and radio.

Toolkit

2.29 RoSPA produced a toolkit for road safety practitioners [Destination Drive: RoSPA's Mature Drivers Initiative](#). It provides an overview of the Destination Drive programme delivered in 2018/19 along with tools and tips for replicating the programme – including how to incorporate training and assessments into a road safety event for older drivers. There is also a resource pack with documents, branded materials and evaluation materials freely available for download from the website.

Ongoing activity

2.30 Alongside the development and delivery of the campaign, RoSPA has planned a series of three events to support older drivers – in keeping with findings from secondary research. The events are planned in the same locations as the campaign (Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen), and in locations likely to reach a high number of older drivers. The events will primarily be driver assessment days,

offering practical advice and solutions. The events will highlight the campaign messages, and may also encourage additional media coverage.

- 2.31 As at February 2020 there was already a good level of interest in the events with 15 of 21 assessment slots booked.
- 2.32 Evaluation activities have been built into the activity plan using the International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communications (AMEC) framework. This involves a range of techniques including evaluation forms, paper surveys, online surveys and Return on Investment calculations. The olderdrivers.org.uk website has a pop up evaluation questionnaire. Of the six responses received to date, 100% of people reported that they found the website useful and 100% said that they were likely to take action as a result of the website content.
- 2.33 Focus group participants indicated that some information on road safety regulations was poorly understood. RoSPA will continue to develop resources for its website which are easy to understand for the target audience. It will also aim to establish a new web domain.

Commentary

- 2.34 The research fulfilled the overarching aim of this phase of the project, namely to help to refine the focus of the campaign and the key outcomes which are important for the target group. Recommendations from the research and the specialist communications agency have been built into the campaign in terms of messages, materials and the methods for reaching the target group. The recommendations have also been taken on board and are shaping ongoing activity relating to the website and resource materials.
- 2.35 The fieldwork was completed on time and within budget. The focus groups reached a total of 23 people, with an average of 6 people per group. This is a good number of people for generating rich, in-depth discussions which provide a range of views and experiences.
- 2.36 While the focus groups provided a good range of views and experiences they do not provide statistically significant results which can be extrapolated to the wider population. The primary research was complemented with a literature review, to make use of existing research into the barriers and facilitators for this demographic. This mixed methods approach allowed RoSPA to gather a breadth and depth of information to inform the campaign.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

3.1 This chapter provides a summary of our evaluation findings.

3.2 There has been a significant amount of activity in the Communicating Effectively with Older Drivers project, all of which has contributed directly or indirectly to achieving its intended outcomes.

Project Activity

3.3 To date (February 2020), the project has:

- Conducted primary research with older drivers and family members, through focus groups and a survey
- Conducted secondary research through a literature review
- Conducted stakeholder consultations
- Developed a marketing campaign
- Developed a marketing strategy
- Launched the campaign.

Progress towards objectives and outcomes

3.4 The main objectives that the project has worked towards this year involved:

- establishing effective and innovative means by which key messages can be delivered to older drivers and their families; and
- establishing the most effective formats into which key road safety and relevant health-related messages can be incorporated to maximise impact and engage with older drivers.

3.5 These two objectives have been met through the research activity and the development of a marketing campaign and strategy, which launched in February 2020.

3.6 The project has worked towards the remaining outcomes. After the campaign has run and the events have been delivered, it will be possible to understand if it has been successful and the extent to which the remaining objectives and outcomes have been achieved.

3.7 In order to better understand if the campaign has had the intended impact, we would suggest further research with older people and their families. We recommend that this research focuses on understanding if the campaign:

- is reaching the target groups;
 - is understood by the target groups;
 - is leading to changes in knowledge, attitudes or behaviours; and
 - needs to be changed in any way.
- 3.8 Some evaluation activity has already been built into the campaign and event activities, using the International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication (AMEC) framework. The activity going forward is based on clear objectives and targets. This commitment to incorporate evaluation into the activity is positive and demonstrates a clear intention to achieve the outcomes and objectives.
- 3.9 We agree with the RoSPA plan, that short surveys at the planned events would be an efficient way to gather feedback. We would also suggest that one-to-one discussions with people and their families would help to develop a bank of case studies. Case studies would not only demonstrate impact in a rich and interesting way, but could also act as further promotional material to support the campaign.